

AN EB -MB TOMB AT JABAL JOFEH IN AMMAN

by
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This tomb was discovered accidentally at the end of August 1980 while workmen laying out a new sewerage line in the area of Um Tina South on Jabal Jofeh overlooking the Roman theater and forum at the wadi bed in down town Amman. The find was reported immediately and the Department of Antiquities took over excavations of the tomb and its adjacent vicinity; ten labourers were employed to lift and carry, and the actual clearance and recording was done by Mr. Hifzi Haddad, Chief Inspector of Antiquities of the Amman Governorate, assisted by Inspector of Antiquities Mr. Tayseer Atayyat. The plans, sections, photographs, preliminary description and dating of the tomb and its contents were prepared by Mr. Haddad, whom the writer wishes to express sincere thanks and appreciation.

Description of the Tomb:

The tomb was originally a natural cave located in the solid limestone rock, with an almost rectangular single chamber, measuring 2.80 m east-west and 4.30 m north-south, had a dome-shaped ceiling cut with a blade about 2 cm wide. A similar instrument and method was reported to have been used at Dhar Mirzbaneh (Lapp, 1966, p. 78, Zayadine, 1978, p. 60). Two benches raised 65 cm high above floor level were found to have been chiseled from natural rock; one on the north side and the other on the south opposite side (Fig. 1 & Pl. LXXVIII, 1). Access to the tomb was provided by a shaft which was then blocked with a large rough stone at the east corner of the chamber (Pl. LXXVIII, 2). Though the opening of the tomb was tightly closed, a small heap of brown soil had filtered through but had not caused any damage to the tomb or its contents. Both benches had scattered human bones and broken pottery vessels over them. The chamber floor was covered by a layer of soft *huwwar* about 10

cm thick and on it was found the pottery deposit. The pottery was arranged in two different groups: The first, on the chamber floor between the two benches on the north and south, consisted of four jars pl. LXXIX, 1-4 and two lamps; pl. LXXXI, 6-7 each lamp is four-spouted and have rounded base of the type common at Jericho, Megiddo, Dhar Mirzbaneh, el-Husn, Amman and other places in Palestine and East Jordan (Zayadine, 1978 p. 62.). The second group of pottery consisted of a large jar and several sherds found on the north bench. pl. LXXX,5.

The use of benches in tombs of this period in East Jordan seems to be unparalleled in Palestine (Zayadine, 1978, p. 62).

Date of the Tomb:

The dating of this type of tomb and its contents is beset with difficulties (for a good discussion of the problematic dating of EB-MB burials in East Jordan see: (Zayadine, 1978, pp. 64-65). This phase was first recognized by Albright in his excavations at Tel Beit Mirsim, which then he and Wright designated as EB III B (Albright, 1956, p. 77; Wright, 1961, p. 86). Evidence of the existence of a phase following the end of the Early Bronze Age and preceding the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age I, further came from excavations at Beth-Shemesh, Bethel, Beth Yerah, Dhar Mirzbaneh and other places in Palestine. EB-MB tomb material from Jericho especially from Tomb F 4 is closely related typologically to the Megiddo tomb groups (Kenyon, I, 1960, p. 144, fig. 47).

The chronology of the EB-MB period in East Jordan is still undecided for lack of stratified archaeological material. Excavations at Ader (AASOR, 34-35, 1960, pp. 79-97), Khirbet Iskander (Parr, 1960), Aro'er (Olivarri, 1969) and Tell Iktanu

(Prag, 1974) have considerably added to our knowledge of this period in East Jordan. The close affinity of the Jabal Jofeh tomb material with the material from Amman's Jabal et-Taj and Sports City tombs (Dajani, 1967-68; Zayadine 1978) does indicate the existence of a transitional period which must have flourished at a date around 1950 B.C. (Zayadine, 1978, p. 65).

This new tomb of Jabal Jofeh must also be assigned to the middle of the twentieth century B.C. This date is also supported by the presence among the pottery group of a large jar in which a combination of the flat loop handle from rim to shoulder and the ledge envelope handle with three overlapping flaps on the body (Pls. LXXIX No. 4, LXXX No. 5).

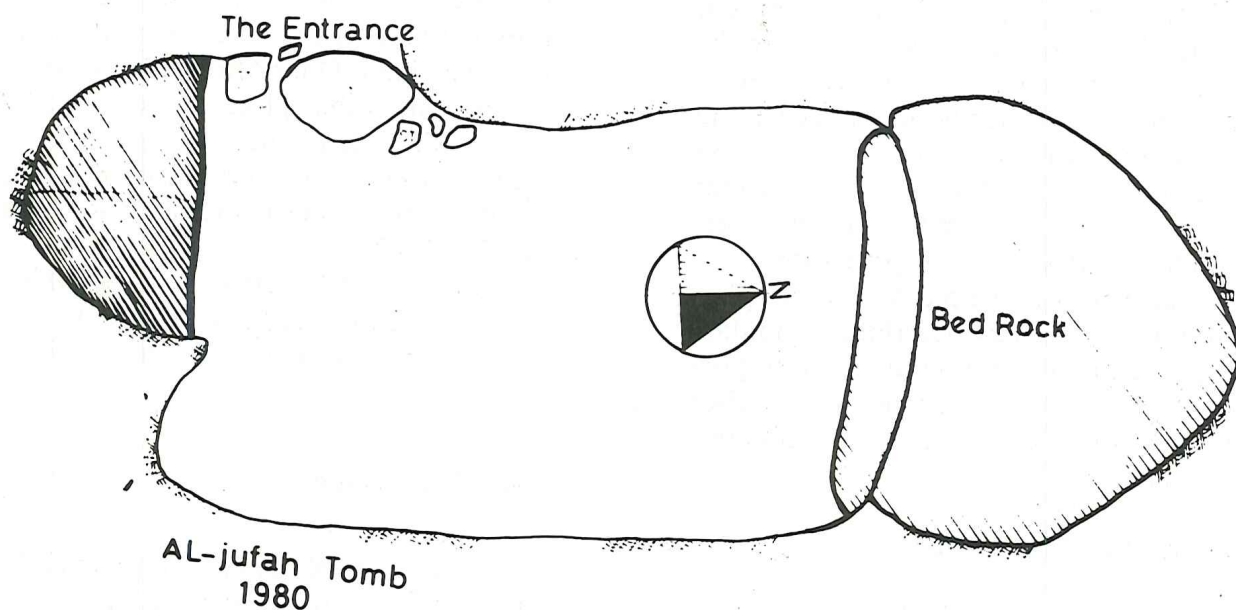


Fig. 1: Ground plan of Tomb

Description of the Pottery;

<i>No</i>	<i>Plate</i>	<i>Provinces</i>	<i>Description</i>
1.	LXXIX	Chamber floor	Plan globular jug, loop angulated handle from rim to shoulder. Lime deposits inside and outside. Dark grey ware with large and small limestone grits. Flat base and slightly everted rim.
2.	LXXIX	Chamber floor	Plain globular jar, two ledge envelope handles, each with three overlapping flaps. Buff ware with large limestone grits. Flat base and slightly everted rim.
3.	LXXIX	Chamber floor	Globular jar, loop handle with a groove in the middle from below rim to shoulder, Buff gritty ware. Moulded clay rope decoration at base of neck and around body. Flat base and everted rim.
4.	LXXIX	Chamber floor	Plain globular jug, two ledge envelope handles, each with three overlapping flaps. Buff gritty ware. Flat base and everted rim.
5.	LXXX	North Bench	Globular jar, two broad loop handles from rim to shoulder decorated with bands of wavy slashes incised vertically. Two more handles of the ledge envelope type with three overlapping flaps are attached to the sides of the body. Buff gritty ware and incised bands of wavy slashes around the shoulder. Similar examples were discovered in Jebel et-Taj Tomb (Dajani, 1967-68, pl. XL).
6.	LXXXI	Chamber floor	Open four-spouted lamp, rounded base, buff gritty ware, traces of burning.
7.	LXXXI	Chamber floor	Open four-spouted lamp, rounded base, black gritty ware, traces of burning.

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